

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Under NEPA, proposed Federal actions, such as those presented in this plan, require preparation of an EIS. An EIS ensures decision-makers are fully apprised of the impacts of the proposed action (preferred alternative), as well as the alternative actions on the human environment.

An important component of the EIS is the description of the area to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration. This Affected Environment section describes the Trail from the City of Selma through Lowndes County to the City of Montgomery. This section addresses both natural and cultural features and stresses the importance of managing them as a comprehensive set of Trail resources.

For purposes of this plan, the Trail consists of three distinct environmental settings: the City of Selma, rural Lowndes County, and the City of Montgomery. Variations in these settings, including changes in buildings and streetscapes, vegetation, terrain, roadway corridors, adjoining land uses, and views, set the character of the Trail and form the basis of the overall cultural landscape.

This section also includes a brief description of the natural environment and the socio-economic conditions of the three counties through which the Trail passes.

Cultural Resources

Landscapes

The marchers' experiences revolved around the broad physical and cultural features of the areas through which they passed. Today, the Trail captures and interprets these experiences in the form of cultural landscapes. A cultural landscape includes a specific geographic region, but also embraces the wildlife, historic resources, and aesthetic values of the area. For purposes of this analysis, the Trail consists of three distinct cultural landscapes. Differences in vegetation and viewsheds provide the main basis for distinguishing among the Trail landscapes. These regions also reflect the three major land use components that exist along the route: agriculture, forests, and urban/suburban uses.

Landscapes should be a high priority for protection because they define the nature of the Trail, both at the time of the original use and in interpretation.

The City of Selma

The City of Selma's physical landscape consists mostly of small-scale, traditional urban spaces set along the Alabama River. The river with its dramatic bluffs signals a sharp and historically significant transition for the marchers as they crossed from the relative security of Selma into the rural setting of the Trail.

Lowndes County

As the marchers passed from Selma over the Edmund Pettus Bridge into the Selmont area, the landscape became more rural. This viewshed between the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Dallas County and Caney Creek in Montgomery County is culturally and historically significant.

In 1965, marchers saw a very rural landscape with harvested corn and cotton fields, as well as pastures with grazing cattle, horses, and mules.

The agricultural landscapes that intertwined with bottomland forest in 1965 remain largely unchanged. Additionally, Big Swamp, a large bottomland forest connected to the road, remains mostly intact. Analysis of photographs indicates a loss of about 15 percent in open space along the route, primarily in the urban areas. Increases in road width, however, have generally pushed vegetation farther from the highway. Table 16 compares the viewsheds along various segments of US Highway 80 to 1965 conditions. Sections of the landscape showing the highest level of integrity (limited changes in land use, limited loss of open space, similar patterns of vegetation and no significant intrusions relative to original conditions) include:

- the section from Dallas County Road 7 to Big Swamp Tributary

- the section from Big Swamp Creek to Lowndes County Road 29

Table 16
Viewshed Integrity

Segment	Viewshed Integrity
Edmund Pettus Bridge to SR 41 at Selmont	3
SR 41 to Hall Campsite at CR 67	2
CR 67 to CR 7 in Dallas	1
CR 7 to Big Swamp Tributary	1
Big Swamp Tributary to CR 17 in Lowndes	2
CR 17 to Big Swamp Creek	2
Big Swamp Creek to CR 29 in Lowndes	1
CR 29 to Caffey Rd	2.5
Caffey Rd to CR 37 in Lowndes	3
CR 37 to Mitchell Young Rd	2
Mitchell Young Rd to Airport	3

Source: Cultural Landscape Inventory, NPS, April 2000

Viewshed Integrity

Viewshed Integrity Key:

- 1: Land uses unchanged; roadside vegetation similar in density and proximity to roadway; open space decreased by less than 10%; no exotic or invasive plant material; no significant intrusions into the historic scene
- 2: Land uses similar, but with some changes in development or evidence of natural succession; open space decreased by 10% to 15%; minor intrusions into the historic scene
- 3: Land uses changed significantly; view obstructed or dramatically altered; roadside vegetation different in either type or distance from roadway; open space decreased by more than 15%; invasive roadside vegetation escaped from cultivation; major intrusions to the historic scene

The essential physical feature of the viewshed is the mid-twentieth century agrarian setting that evolved from the historic plantation social structure. The road, right-of-way and adjacent landscape create the context for the march, reflecting a fertile soil region of the Deep South where African-Americans cultivated white-owned land.

The City of Montgomery

Once passing the Montgomery Airport and Caney Creek, Trail visitors transition into the last of the environmental settings, the City of Montgomery. This section of the Trail again features the landscape of a traditional urban space.

US Highway 80

One of the most defining elements of the cultural landscape of the Trail is US Highway 80, along which participants marched. The highway has a design typical of highways built before construction of the Federal Interstate Highway System. The roadway has steep vertical alignments, bridges with open guardrails, and narrow shoulders along its older segments. Many of the features of the highway do not meet current safety standards.

The roadway proper (the physical alignment and position in the landscape) is of variable historic integrity with some sections remaining much as they did in 1965 and other sections significantly altered. According to the 2000 NPS *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, the specific design of US Highway 80 bears little relationship to march events or the overall historic character of the area.

However, the roadway's alignment, median, and number of lanes between the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Dallas County and Caney Creek in Montgomery County strongly evoke a setting, feeling and association specific to the events of 1965.

During their journey in 1965, marchers passed from the open, wider four-lane portions of the highway inside Selma to a narrow two-lane country road before reaching Montgomery. Extensive alterations to the roadway alignment, median design, and the number of lanes disrupt this transition, creating a more homogenous feel than the marchers experienced along the route. Table 17 evaluates the integrity of current segments of the roadway relative to conditions in 1965.

Table 17
Roadway Integrity and Preservation Priorities

Segment	Roadway Integrity
Edmund Pettus Bridge to SR 41 at Selmont	1
SR 41 to Hall Campsite at CR 67	1
CR 67 to CR 7 in Dallas	1
CR 7 to Big Swamp Tributary	2
Big Swamp Tributary to CR 17 in Lowndes	2
CR 17 to Big Swamp Creek	2
Big Swamp Creek to CR 29 in Lowndes	3
CR 29 to Caffey Rd	3
Caffey Rd to CR 37 in Lowndes	1
CR 37 to Mitchell Young Rd	1
Mitchell Young Rd to Airport	1

Source: Cultural Landscape Inventory, NPS, April 2000

Roadway integrity by segment

Roadway Integrity Key:

- 1: Roadway alignment unchanged; number of lanes unchanged.
- 2: Roadway alignment unchanged; number of lanes increased.
- 3: Roadway alignment changed; number of lanes increased.

Historic resources

The historic resources associated with the Trail are extensive. The plan identifies a total of 8 individual structures and 12 historic districts along or near the Trail that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Table 18 lists these high potential historic resources.

Table 18
High Potential Historic Structures and Districts on or near the Trail

Site	Address	Location
First Baptist Church	709 Martin Luther King, Jr. St.	Selma
Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church	410 Martin Luther King, Jr. St.	Selma
Dallas County Courthouse	109 Union St.	Selma
Water Avenue Historic District	Water Ave.	Selma
Old Town Historic District	Roughly bounded by the Alabama River, Jefferson Davis Ave., Pettus, Broad, and Franklin Sts.	Selma
Icehouse Historic District	Roughly bounded by Jefferson Davis and Dallas Aves., Union and Lapsley Sts., and Valley Cr.	Selma
Riverview Historic District	Roughly bounded by Selma Ave., Satterfield and Lapsley Sts. and the Alabama R.	Selma
Lowndes County Courthouse	Washington St.	Hayneville
Lowndesboro	N of U.S. 80	Lowndesboro
City of St. Jude Historic District	2048 W. Fairview Ave.	Montgomery
Court Square-Dexter Avenue Historic District	Roughly Dexter Ave., Perry, Court, and Monroe Sts.	Montgomery
Court Square Historic District	21-35 Court St., 12 Dexter Ave., 18--24 N. Court St., and Court Sq.	Montgomery
Dexter Avenue Baptist Church	454 Dexter Ave.	Montgomery
Pastorium, Dexter Church	309 S. Jackson St.	Montgomery
Alabama State Capitol	Goat Hill, E end of Dexter Ave.	Montgomery
Alabama State Univ District	915 S. Jackson St. in Montgomery	Montgomery
Mt. Zion AME Zion Church	467 Holt St.	Montgomery

Table 18
High Potential Historic Structures and Districts on or near the Trail

Site	Address	Location
North Lawrence-Monroe Street Historic District	132-148, 216, 220 Monroe St. and 14, 22, 28-40, 56 N. Lawrence St.	Montgomery
South Perry Street Historic District	Roughly Perry St. between Washington St. and Dexter Ave.	Montgomery
Lower Commerce Street Historic District and Boundary Increase	Roughly bounded by RR tracks, N. Court, Commerce, Coosa, and Tallapoosa Sts.	Montgomery

Source: National Register of Historic Places Database, June 2003

Archaeological resources

Evidence of archeological sites along the Trail is limited. Archeologists have found sites in the area that date as far back as 600 B.C. Major village sites identified in the area include: Piachi, Mabila, and unnamed villages near Selma and Durant Bend.

From 1539 to 1543, Hernando De Soto led the first expedition into the interior of Eastern North America. According to the expedition diaries, De Soto and his men apparently traveled in the vicinity of a portion of the US Highway 80 corridor west of Montgomery and south of the Alabama River.

In the early 1800s, Selma was the site of a major slave auction center, serving the entire southeast. By the mid-1800s, Selma had become a shipping hub. The corridor through which US Highway 80 now passes served as a major transportation route, with the Alabama River, a stagecoach line and a railroad all connecting Selma and Montgomery.

The Battle of Holy Ground took place in 1813 approximately six miles north of US Highway 80, near Whitehall. In the battle, U.S. troops led by General Claiborne overpowered the Muscogee Indians.

Natural Environment

Physiography

The historic route stretches through the central Alabama counties of Dallas, Lowndes and Montgomery in the northern part of the Coastal Plain Province. The Trail also crosses the Black Prairie (Black Belt).

The Black Belt, which consists of red prairie land or post-oak prairie land, extends east-west for 15 miles, in some places, from an area just south of Montgomery, south to LeGrand and Downing. The relief ranges from gently sloping in the north to a higher and more rolling topography in the south.

The soils of the Black Belt are thought to have strongly influenced the historical events of 1965. The Black Belt attracted many agricultural entrepreneurs in the 19th Century because of the belief that the soil would yield cotton in great abundance. The resulting economy revolved around a planter class supported by slave labor. Planters bought and sold slaves in the markets of Selma and Montgomery. Even after the abolition of slavery, the agricultural economy of the region created a social system that disenfranchised African-Americans.

Climate

The climate in Alabama is considered humid and subtropical, with mild winters and hot summers. Winters (January) near the coast average a temperature of 54°F and summers (July) average a temperature of 81°F.

Alabama has a consistently high amount of precipitation throughout the year. Precipitation along the Trail ranges from an annual average of 53.10 inches in Dallas County to a range of 49.16 to 52 inches in areas of Lowndes and Montgomery Counties.

Air quality

According to air quality data collected from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Montgomery Alabama Metropolitan Statistical Area is in compliance with all national air quality standards.

Vegetation

Vegetation along the Trail ranges from forested upland to herbaceous cultivated vegetation and wetlands. Between Selma and Montgomery, much of the land in Lowndes County consists of deciduous, evergreen and mixed forests. Agriculture is also dominant with production of corn, soybeans, tobacco and cotton and hay pastures for area livestock. Woody wetlands contain forests, which are periodically saturated or covered with water. Emergent herbaceous wetlands account for a smaller amount of the area and consist of perennial vegetation, which are also periodically saturated or covered with water.

Tables 24, 25, and 26 in Appendix 5 describe more specific vegetation along US Highway 80. The NPS *Cultural Landscape Inventory* presents additional information on vegetation at specific sites.

Wildlife

Wildlife in Alabama, and along the Trail, is both abundant and varied. Typical bird species include migratory and resident

water fowl such as wild turkey, mallard duck, downy woodpecker, blue jay, bald eagle, wood duck, mourning dove and redtail hawk. Opossum, raccoon, and gray squirrel are common, along with larger fauna such as bobcat, alligator, coyote and whitetail deer.

Deer dominate the area along the Trail, with 16 to 30 deer per square mile in north Montgomery and more than 30 deer per square mile in Dallas and Lowndes counties. The Lowndes Wildlife Management Area in the town of Whitehall between Bob Woodruff Lake and US Highway 80 allows hunting of deer, turkey, squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, dove, duck, goose, and wild hog.

Threatened and endangered species

As of August 31, 2003, there were 97 animal species and 18 plant species that are threatened or endangered in the State of Alabama according to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Further research is needed to determine where or if any of these species occur/live along the march route. For a complete list of threatened and endangered species, see Tables 27 and 28 in the Appendix 5.

Water resources

With over 235,000 miles of waterways, the state of Alabama has abundant surface water resources used for industrial uses, power generation, waste dilution, recreation, and domestic consumption.

The most significant surface water resource in the Trail region is the Alabama River. The river connects Selma to Montgomery and forms the northernmost boundary for both Lowndes and Montgomery counties. Between Selma and Montgomery, the river is impounded as the Jones Bluff Reservoir, also known as Bob Woodruff Lake. The reservoir is over 12,000 acres and supports hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and recreation uses.

Watersheds are areas of land that catch precipitation such as snow and rain and drain into a water body such as a stream, lake, or groundwater. Seven watersheds

intersect the three-county area along the Trail. These watersheds include: Upper Alabama, Cahaba, Middle Alabama, Sepulga, Upper Conecuh, Patsaliga and Lower Tallapoosa. The watersheds drain into approximately 124 streams and rivers, including the Little Cahaba, Cahaba, Tallapoosa, Pastaliga, Coosa and the Alabama rivers.

Groundwater is an important source of water for many municipalities in Alabama. Much of the state's precipitation is absorbed by soil, evaporates, or enters the groundwater system. Aquifers near the Trail are considered generally sufficient for industrial or municipal development with a yield of 150 gallons per minute or more.

Floodplains

The Trail does not fall within the 100-year floodplain. Nearby areas of floodplain likely exist near the Big Swamp Creek just north of US Highway 80 near County Road 17.

Wetlands

According to the 1993 *Selma to Montgomery National Trail Study*, no significant wetlands exist along the Trail. Nearby areas of intact wetland systems likely exist along Big Swamp Creek just north of US Highway 80 near County Road 17.

Socioeconomic Environment

The authorized route of the Trail travels 54 miles and crosses three counties, ranging from regional cities to rural communities. The sections below describe land ownership and use and socio-economic conditions along the Trail.

Prime and unique farmland

Agriculture use is common in portions of rural Lowndes County. Agriculture produces corn, soybeans, tobacco, cotton and hay pastures for area livestock.

Land ownership and use

The march route from Selma to Montgomery mainly follows US Highway 80. The State designates this roadway as both the Jefferson Davis Highway and the Hernando DeSoto Trail. Most of the land along the route is privately owned. The Montgomery Airport is the largest land owner along the route. State and local governments maintain limited rights-of-way adjacent to the portions of the road within their jurisdictions.

Predominant land uses along the route include residential, industrial, and commercial uses in the cities and agricultural, forestry, residential, and industrial uses in rural areas.

The City of Selma has a relatively compact, traditional, and pedestrian-scale downtown just north of the Alabama River. Visitors can move easily throughout the downtown on a connected grid of streets and sidewalks. Main land uses in the downtown include city and Dallas County government offices, churches, small stores and offices. Some residential uses also exist, particularly along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue.

Much of the historic architecture of downtown Selma remains intact, but shows varying degrees of preservation. The downtown core features a variety of well-maintained historic structures and museums, including the Brown Chapel AME Church, the Old Depot Museum, and the National Voting Rights Museum. Marginal businesses and some deteriorated structures, however, scatter throughout the downtown.

With the transition from downtown Selma to the unincorporated Selmont area, large-lot houses intersperse with light industrial activity. Craig Field Airport and Industrial Complex, which contains industrial buildings and recreation facilities, is the largest single use in this area.

The route becomes rural in Lowndes County, consisting primarily of agriculture (crops and livestock) and forests. The Montgomery Airport signals the transition to a more urbanized land use pattern. Commercial and industrial uses intensify east of the airport.

Major land uses in the Montgomery portion of the route include the 56-acre City of St. Jude complex. Founded in the 1930s by a Catholic priest, the City of St. Jude houses a historic church, former hospital, administration building, social services center, and existing elementary and high school. The hospital closed in 1985 and much of the existing building now serves as apartments for low-income families. Portions of the hospital, however, remain unused.

Primarily African-American neighborhoods surround the St. Jude property. The Washington Park neighborhood shows some signs of economic distress and physical decline. The area just north of St. Jude consists of a commercial strip mall with a grocery store.

Downtown Montgomery features a more urbanized scale than Selma. State government offices, along with some cultural institutions, dominate the downtown core.

Population and economy of the region

Dallas and Lowndes Counties are rural, poor, and have a high minority population relative to the State of Alabama and the US as a whole. Median incomes for both Dallas and Lowndes Counties are more than \$10,000 below that of the State of Alabama, and nearly \$20,000 below the national median figure. As of the 2000 Census, the unemployment rate in these counties was above 11 percent, nearly twice as high as the State of Alabama unemployment rate. The main economic activities in Dallas County are manufacturing and public administration; the main economic activities in Lowndes County are manufacturing, construction, and agriculture.

Montgomery County has an average rank in terms of income and employment for the State of Alabama. Racially, Montgomery County has equal numbers of whites and African-Americans. The presence of the State Capitol and government offices buoys Montgomery County's economy, which has a large public administration and professional services sector.

Table 19
Economic Status of Counties versus State and US, 2000

	Median Income	% Unemployed
Dallas	\$23,370	11.1%
Lowndes	\$23,050	11.9%
Montgomery	\$35,962	6.5%
Alabama	\$34,135	6.2%
US	\$41,994	5.7%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 20
Population Breakdown of Counties versus State and US, 2000

	Population	% White	% Black
Dallas	46,365	35.6%	63.3%
Lowndes	13,473	25.9%	73.4%
Montgomery	223,510	48.8%	48.6%
Alabama	4,447,100	71.1%	26.0%
US	281,421,906	75.1%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 21
Poor Census Tracts in Dallas County, 2000

Census Tract	9971 (South of Selmont along Co Rd 30)	9972 (South of the City of Selma and including Selmont)	9973 (East of Selmont along US Hwy 80)
Population	1,672	2,224	5,246
% Unemployed	11.5%	21.5%	15.0%
% Poverty	30.2%	54.3%	42.6%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

A review of income figures for areas of Dallas County outside of Selma indicates particularly high rates of unemployment and poverty.

Most of the areas through which the Trail passes have experienced recent population growth, including Lowndes and Montgomery Counties and the city of Montgomery. The populations of Dallas County and the city of Selma, however, declined in the 1990s. (See Table 21)

Table 22
Population Growth by County and City, 1990 to 2000

		1990	2000	1990 to 2000 % Change
County	Alabama	4,040,587	4,447,100	10.1%
	Dallas	48,130	46,365	-3.7%
	Lowndes	12,658	13,473	6.4%
	Montgomery	209,085	223,510	6.9%
City	Selma	23,755	20,512	-13.7%
	Montgomery	187,106	201,568	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000